

Message Text

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73

ACTION ARA-06

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4065

INFO DOD WASHDC

CINCSOUTH

USNAVSO

DIA WASHDC

CNO WASHDC

COMNAVINTCOM WASHDC

AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 0378

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, MASS, EC

SUBJECT: ATTITUDE OF THE ECUADOREAN NAVY CNO TOWARD US

REF: 1) USDAO QUITO 152130 JAN 75

2) USDAO QUITO 241625 DEC 74

1. EMBASSY WOULD LIKE TO DRAW DEPARTMENT'S ATTENTION TO A DAO REPORT "ATTITUDE OF ECUADOREAN NAVY CNO", BEING SENT SEPARATELY, INFO COPY TO STATE. REPORT IS BASED ON RECENT CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN NAVATT, CHIEF OF USMLO, AND OTHER EMBASSY OFFICERS, WITH ADMIRAL VASQUEZ, COMMANDER OF ECUADOREAN NAVY.

2. VASQUEZ, A MERCURIAL PERSONALITY WITH A TENDENCY TOWARD THE CHURLISH IN EVEN THE BEST OF TIMES, HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY OBSTREPEROUS TOWARDS THE US IN THE LAST SEVERAL MONTHS. AS NAVATT POINTS OUT, HE HAS HIS UPS AND DOWNS, AND HE'S CURRENTLY IN ONE OF THE LATTER. PERHAPS IT'S BEEN THE STRAIN OVER
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RECENT IN-FIGHTING AMONG THE ECUADOREAN MILITARY, OR

THE FACT THAT THE NAVY JUST LOST THE PRESTIGIOUS GOVERNORSHIP OF GUAYAS/GUAYAQUIL PROVINCE (QUITO 8397), OR FEARS THAT HE MIGHT BE RETIRED, OR THOUGHTS THAT HE MIGHT HAVE HAD A CHANCE AT THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE "JOINT CHIEFS" (QUITO 0284). AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTOR TO HIS REACTION IS THE FACT THAT WE, FOR REASONS NOT OF OUR OWN MAKING, HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO REVEAL THE IDENTITY OF THE FIRST DESTROYER THEY MAY GET, AND HAVE NOT BEEN FULLY FORTHCOMING ON THE POSSIBILITY OF A SECOND DESTROYER LATER. AT ONE POINT (ON DECEMBER 23RD) VASQUEZ FLATLY ACCUSED NAVATT OF KNOWING THE IDENTITY OF THE FIRST DD, AND REFUSING TO TELL VASQUEZ, WITHHOLDING THE INFORMATION UNTIL VASQUEZ' REPLACEMENT WAS NAMED. ON 13 JANUARY, VASQUEZ TOLD CHIEF/USMLO THAT THERE WOULD BE "NO TRAINING, PURCHASE OF REPAIR PARTS, COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE, ETC, UNTIL AND UNLESS A DD IS NAMED FOR TRANSFER TO ECUADOR". VASQUEZ PERSONALLY CALLED OFF THE VISIT TO THE US OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE ECUADOREAN NAVAL ACADEMY THE DAY BEFORE THE LATTER WAS DUE TO LEAVE GUAYAQUIL FOR MIAMI ON AN IV GRANT, AND HAS SAID THAT IF THE US CONGRESS WON'T AUTHORIZE GENERALIZED TARIFF PREFERENCES FOR ECUADOR, THERE IS LITTLE REASON TO BELIEVE IT WILL AUTHORIZE TRANSFER OF A DESTROYER.

3. WE BELIEVE NAVATT'S ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION IS ACCURATE, AND THAT THIS IS MAINLY THE RESULT OF ONE OF VASQUEZ' TEMPER TANTRUMS. HE HAS, IN FACT, BEEN UNDER CONSIDERABLE STRESS FOR THE REASONS ENUMERATED IN PARA 2 ABOVE. IN ADDITION, HE SITS ON TOP OF THE ECUADOREAN SERVICE THAT MOST WANTS TO REHABILITATE THE SAD SHAPE IT'S IN, AND IS USING PRESSURE TACTICS TO GET THE HELP HE NEEDS FROM US. THE NAVY IS, IN A SENSE, THE MOST RADICALIZED OF THE ECUADOREAN SERVICES, BOTH BECAUSE YOUNGER OFFICERS ARE UNHAPPY AT THE SHAPE IT'S IN, AS WELL AS THE FACT THAT THE NAVY NOMINALLY OVERSEES ECUADOR'S NATURAL RESOURCES -- SOURCE OF MOST OF THE RECENT CONFLICT WITH US: 200-MILE FISHING LIMIT, OIL IN GENERAL; ADA IN PARTICULAR; PERMISSION FOR WEALTHY AMERICANS TO CRUISE TO THE GALAPAGOS ON THEIR OWN YACHTS; THE "STELLA MARIS" FIASCO (QUITO 0230), ETC. EMBASSY
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DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT VASQUEZ' ORNERINESS REFLECTS OFFICIAL GOE ATTITUDES TOWARD THE US (AT LEAST NOT YET), AND WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT THE MOST PRODUCTIVE ATTITUDE WE CAN ADOPT AT THIS POINT IS "THIS TOO SHALL PASS," ESPECIALLY IF WE ARE SOON IN A POSITION TO NAME THE FIRST DD. HEMENWAY

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